

THE JOURNEY // Trust the GPS

Good morning/evening, I am so excited to be with you today. If we have not had the opportunity to meet, my name is Luke and I am one of the youth pastors here at the church.

I LOVE working with young people. I have the privilege of working with our birth-young adults in some capacity and it is the best! I love raising up and pointing the next generation to Jesus. My wife Sarah and I have two boys, John Luke and Jonah, and it is also my full time job to raise these little guys up in the way they should go. And, some days are harder than others! But, its such a joy and there's no greater role than to share Jesus with the next generation.

Over the past 8 years, I've had the opportunity to travel and attend some different youth conferences - which is so fun! This last spring, Sarah, myself, and Pastor Jake were heading down to the cities to attend a youth conference.

Now, are there any people here who love maps? My wife makes fun of me, but there have been multiple times she's caught me staring at my phone on maps and she'll ask, "what are you doing?" Just looking at an airport in Papua New Guinea, or looking at some mountains in Montana. It doesn't have to do with anything - not like a trip we're going on or upcoming vacation - I just like seeing different areas of the world through my phone.

ALL this to say, when it comes to maps, I prefer Google Maps. Now, I might have just lost half the room right there... And, before you write me off just hear me out. I'm not saying it's better or worse at giving directions, I just like Google Maps because when I'm chillin' and studying a national park in Tanzania, Google has more photos, reviews, and information. So, in turn, I tend to use it when driving as well.

Okay, back to my story.. Jake, Sarah, and I were heading to the cities at the start of construction season. We were running behind, which was dressing me out. I'm a type A personality, but Jake and Sarah are type B, maybe more accurately like type Z. Like the people who snooze the alarm 8 times and live life stress free. I had already looked at the directions the night before and knew what way I needed to go, Sarah had Apple maps pulled up, and Jake was using some app called Ways. Already behind, the other two somehow convinced me to stop and get coffee, because, you know, what's 10 more minutes?... So we are on the way down and Sarah is telling me to take i94 through Minneapolis, but that wasn't in MY plan. I was planning on taking 494 down and around. We argued.. I stuck with my plan. We hit traffic, and because of a recent crash we got delayed another 20 minutes...

Somehow, I convinced myself that my plan was better than the real-time updated GPS. And, in my stubbornness, I ended up taking a longer route, a more inefficient route, to get to my destination.

Today, I want to talk about what it looks like to trust the GPS on this journey we call life. And the GPS we have is not right 90% of the time. He knows everything in real time, and even more importantly, knows all before it will even happen.

God has given us a personal GPS called the Holy Spirit who lives in us and leads, guides, and directs our steps. Today he is available for me and available for you as well.

Pray

Now, before we get too far into the details today, I want to give a generic overview of who the Holy Spirit is. For those newer to your faith, the Holy Spirit is a part of the triune God. One God, three persons. You have God the Father, who we read about throughout the Bible and specifically the Old Testament. Then, you have God who stepped foot on earth in a human body - Jesus. Fully human, fully God. Jesus was AWESOME. Read about him sometime - but Jesus could only be in one spot at one time. So, as Jesus tells us in John 16, Jesus went back up to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit, the same spirit that led and directed Jesus during his time here on earth. And now, WE have access to the Spirit because of Jesus. He is the one who speaks with us today.

Now, we could do a 10 week series regarding the Holy Spirit - but for today we are looking into how the Spirit leads us on The Journey of Life. And, there are a couple of themes from Scripture I want to specifically look at. For the sake of clarity today: GPS and the Holy Spirit are synonymous and interchangeable. I might bounce back and fourth, but just know I mean the same thing as we dive in today.

We need to move to get direction.

Genesis 12:1-4

1 The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. 2 I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. 3 I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you."

4 So Abram departed as the Lord had instructed, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran.

For those wondering: Abram is the same as Abraham.. This is the start of the nation of Israel. I love this. God chooses a barren couple - in the chapter before we read that Abram and Sarah were unable to have kids - and THIS is who he chooses to start a nation!? God says, **I will make you into a great nation...** Sometimes, the very thing we think disqualifies us from being used by God is the very thing he calls us for. **God will equip you along the journey.** Trust the GPS.

What I also love is the lack of clarity in this directive. *Hey, pick up everything you own, everything that is comfortable, and I want you to move far away.* I would have had so many

questions. Where? How long will I be gone for? Is where we are going cold? God doesn't give Abram a map, doesn't further direction other than GO.

What I've learned on this Journey with God is that He usually doesn't give multiple directions at a time. **God will only give you the next step.** We don't get to zoom out and see the big picture, only He sees that! We just follow His lead, step by step. And, in order to get more direction, we need to start moving. **We need to move to get direction.** Trust the GPS.

As we are on the Journey, we are likely to miss a turn. Last week, pastor Doug talked about detours - and how sometimes, God uses detours to teach us something. As the Israelites wandered the desert, they were still being led through the desert. Guess what - God was still guiding them - the GPS was still working! But they were being taught while on their 40 year detour.

There are times when God leads us through a detour, and there are times we simply miss the turn ourselves. We miss the mark. We are disobedient to God's leading.

In Jonah 1, we read a great example of this.

1 The Lord gave this message to Jonah son of Amittai: 2 "Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh. Announce my judgment against it because I have seen how wicked its people are."

3 But Jonah got up and went in the opposite direction to get away from the Lord. He went down to the port of Joppa, where he found a ship leaving for Tarshish. He bought a ticket and went on board, hoping to escape from the Lord by sailing to Tarshish.

This is probably the clearest example in Scripture we have of someone getting direction from God and running from it. It's like driving and God says, "turn left" and not only do we miss the left turn, but we turn right and instead of heading to the Cities we drive to Bismark. Jonah is outta here! But here is what I love about the story of Jonah - this is not a passage we should read and be like, "I'm going to be like Jonah! What a hero!" But it is a story of the faithfulness of God even in our mistakes.

You see, **the GPS continues to lead even after a missed turn.** And Jonah gets the craziest rerouting journey in history, repents as he is in the belly of a fish for three days, and gives God's message to the people of Nineveh where tens of thousands of people would come to know God.

We are going to make mistakes, but if we confess our mistakes, repent (turn back around), and trust the GPS, He will take us to where we need to go. Trust the One who is leading us.

There are times when we get direction from the Holy Spirit that doesn't make sense. It's like me wanting to take 494 but Sarah telling me to go the other way - it didn't make sense until I got down the road and realized, "Oh, she was right."

I think back to when I was in high school and trying to figure out what I wanted to do with my life. I remember thinking of all the things that just made sense: I like math, I should use that. My dad has worked in rehab: I could do something with sports rehab or therapy. I wanted to continue to play a sport in college, I should go somewhere that has that as an option.

I took a college visit to Bethel University; a beautiful campus. The staff was welcoming, my tour guide was in the physical therapy program and also a manager for the boys hockey team. I got to meet the coach - everything went SO WELL. It just made sense.

Yet, I had a still, quiet voice telling me to check out North Central University... It made no sense.

But, The Holy Spirit is intentional in its direction.

Little did I know this would be the place I would grow, learn to love writing and language arts, and meet lifelong friends and teammates who would also be in ministry.

I didn't see the big picture, but God did. And I needed to learn to trust the GPS.

I'm reminded of Philip in Acts 8,

26 As for Philip, an angel of the Lord said to him, "Go south down the desert road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza." 27 So he started out, and he met the treasurer of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under the Kandake, the queen of Ethiopia. The eunuch had gone to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and he was now returning. Seated in his carriage, he was reading aloud from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

29 The Holy Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and walk along beside the carriage."

30 Philip ran over and heard the man reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

31 The man replied, "How can I, unless someone instructs me?" And he urged Philip to come up into the carriage and sit with him.

Philip helps the man interpret some of the Old Testament that pointed to Jesus and shares the Good News.

36 As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look! There's some water! Why can't I be baptized?" 38 He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him..

The Holy Spirit is intentional in its direction. The longer I am on the Journey with God, the more I have realized the direction He gives me is less for me and more for those around me. I believe early on in our faith, everything is centered around us growing.

Camps & MYC when I was 15 was very much: God what do you have for me? But attending camps and events now look more like: God what do you have for your people? And how can I be used by you to help?

God wants to use you to bring life to other people. YOU are the vehicle God has decided to use to spread the message of Jesus around the world. He leads and directs His people to share the good news with those who don't yet know.

I realize now more than ever that I NEED God's direction. I need His guidance because on my own, I mess stuff up. I miss turns. I do things my own way.

How prideful must I be to not ask the Lord for direction? For help? Pride is not thinking, "I'm better than God," but rather not even asking Him for direction in the first place. Thinking I can navigate this life without the One who created it - the author of it all.

I need to trust the GPS, *like Philip, because there are people waiting to hear the Good News.*

As we are driving, **the GPS doesn't turn the wheel for you.** (Worship team come up)

If I were driving, and all of a sudden the GPS started taking control, that would be crazy! Also, it wouldn't really be my decision. My measure of obedience to God's voice wouldn't really be accurate because it wouldn't be me choosing! We need to listen and obey the voice of God.

Sometimes, when I'm working with students they ask how they can know if it's God speaking to them or if it's just their own thoughts; almost like they are expecting to have this crazy Spiritual moment where the Holy Spirit breaks open the skies and tells them to go invite a friend to church. It's rarely the loud, obvious voice - but instead He speaks in the quiet, in our thoughts, through our conscience. The Holy Spirit is a gentleman, and you always have the choice to listen or to disobey.

The Holy Spirit doesn't take control and turn the wheel for you: you are in control. But he will gently lead and guide you.

As I was preparing for this weekend, I kept having this thought come to mind: what if The Waters Church all practiced learning to trust the GPS. And I say practice because it is a learning experience! Learning to trust His voice. Learning to hear it. But what if we all learned to trust the GPS? Imagine what this community would look like with thousands of believers following the lead of the Holy Spirit - having intentional conversations, family prayer times, sharing meals with neighbors, and spreading the message of Jesus. That's powerful.

I want to invite you to stand with me today.

As we close, the team is going to play a song and I want to create a space where we can ask the GPS for some direction - ask the Holy Spirit for something practical that you can put into practice today/this week.

I believe some of you already have some direction that God has been giving you. Maybe He has been nudging you for a while, and *sometimes we keep asking hoping for a different direction but He already told you what to do.* And God is reminding you of it today.

- Maybe God has been encouraging you to dive into a Bible study and you have been static.
- Maybe He's leading you to start praying or reading the Bible together as a family. For the parents in here: your greatest mission field is in your home. How can we ask the Holy Spirit for help in leading our families?
- Maybe He's nudging you to invite your coworker to church.

And maybe you don't know if it is the Holy Spirit speaking or your own thoughts. I always process it through this lens:

1. Is it a thought you wouldn't normally think? "Go pray for them.."
2. Does it align with Scripture?
3. Does it align with God's character?

If yes, then DO IT. It can't hurt.

If you are unsure and looking for direction, He has already given some directives that we can ALWAYS count on.

- Love your neighbor.
 - Matthew 22:39
- Love your enemies.
 - Matthew 5:44
- Go and make disciples.
 - Matthew 28:19
- Serve people.
 - John 13:14
- Feed the hungry and care for the needy.
 - Matthew 25:35
- Care for the widows and orphans.
 - James 1:27
- Give generously.
 - Luke 12:33

As the worship team leads us over the next few minutes, we're just going to ask God to give us a next step. And I want to pray a spirit of boldness over you so that you would rise up and trust the GPS - and that we would see a move of God across this community as His people learn to trust the GPS.

Pray

Song

Pray

If you'd like prayer or communion, we have those available on the sides. Praying you have a blessed and Spirit-led week, and that the name of Jesus would be made greater in our homes, schools, and workplaces. Thanks for joining us today.

SATURDAY

If you'd like prayer or communion, we have those available on the sides. On Saturdays, we go unplugged, meaning if you want to stay and linger the worship team will stay for a while and you're welcome to stay as well. For those who are ready to head out: I'm Praying you have a blessed and Spirit-led week, and that the name of Jesus would be made greater in our homes, schools, and workplaces. Thanks for joining us today.